TEXTILE BLOCKS

IN THE COLLECTION OF GOVERNMENT MUSEUM, CHENNAI.

Compiled By

M.N.Pushpa, M.sc., M.A.,
Curator for Botany,
Government Museum,
Egmore, Chennai - 600 008.

Published By

Thiru. S.S. JAWAHAR, I.A.S.,
Principal Secretary / Commissioner,
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PREFACE

One of the ancient handicrafts of the Deccan that was becoming famous in India is the process of dye making and block printing. The process is both intricate and subtle and there are only a few places in India where this art still survives. The printing methods are classified as

1. Block prints
2. Block printed and Hand painted &
3. Hand painted

Dye blocks are used to print textiles. It is applied on all fabrics on which a pattern is produced subsequent to the weaving of the cloth, by the application of dye stuff or pigment to the surface of the fabric. The Indian dyer expresses in his art, the Indian women's love of colour.

The direct or application process implies the use of the wooden block directly on the fabric & is commonly known as the Block printing method. The art of using pigments to ornament fabrics has an ancient origin. The discovery of a fragment of madder-dyed fabric at Mohenjo-Daro, sticking to a silver vase, would lead us to believe that the mordant process of dyeing cloth was known in India five thousand years. The Block-printing centers of South India are at Erode, Tirupur, Kumbakonam, Mangalore and Masulipatnam. The decorative motifs of the block vary from floral, faunal, geometric, rings, dots and zigzag arrangement. The Peepul leaf (Ficus religiosa) seems to be the common theme. Building structure, creeper, climber designs, lotus flower, and peacocks is also found in the textile blocks.

The textile block collections of Government Museum, Chennai are a century old. One hundred and twenty eight textile blocks photographs have been provided in this album to enjoy the beauty and artisan work involved in the blocks for the first time. I definitely hope that this would fulfill the needs of the textile designers and others who are interested in the field of Block designing.

I would like to place on record my deep sense of gratitude to the Commissioner of Museums Thiru. S.S.Jawahar, I.A.S., for having permitted me to bring out this album.

Date: 24.2.2012
Place: Chennai-600 008

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FOREWORD

Government Museum, Chennai is well renowned for its collections since its inception in 1851. The Botany Section has a unique collection of carved wood print blocks amongst its various collcetions. This collection is now brought out for the first time as a Photographic album for the benefit of the visitors

The use of wooden blocks has been in vogue since the 18th century. Block printing is ancient, and is referred to in the Mahabharata. The most famous printed textiles are the old Calicoes of Masulipatnam. Different designs are used for a multiple representations of floral and faunal motifs. The block stamps are used to print the traditional fabrics. The print blocks are carved out of wood, copper or a combination of both.

Many fragments of resist-dyed cloths have been discovered from the tombs at Fostat in Egypt, which dates back to 12th century. It is stated that probably China was the inventor of block printing

Government Museum, Chennai has the textile block collections numbering to more than hundreds. Since the designs are very intricate and nicely executed it was decided to bring it out as a photographic album for reference to people of all walks of life

In this regard Tmt.M.N.Pushpa Curator for Botany has done an excellent work of documentation in describing these textile blocks. I congratulate her for the meticulous work in preparing the collection of textile blocks as a photographic album to be published as the Museum publication

This album on Textile Blocks is the first of its kind and it depicts ooc hundred and twenty eight wood blocks of various motifs. I earnestly hope that this photographic album would serve the needs of the designers, researchers, scholars and interested visitors in the field of textiles.

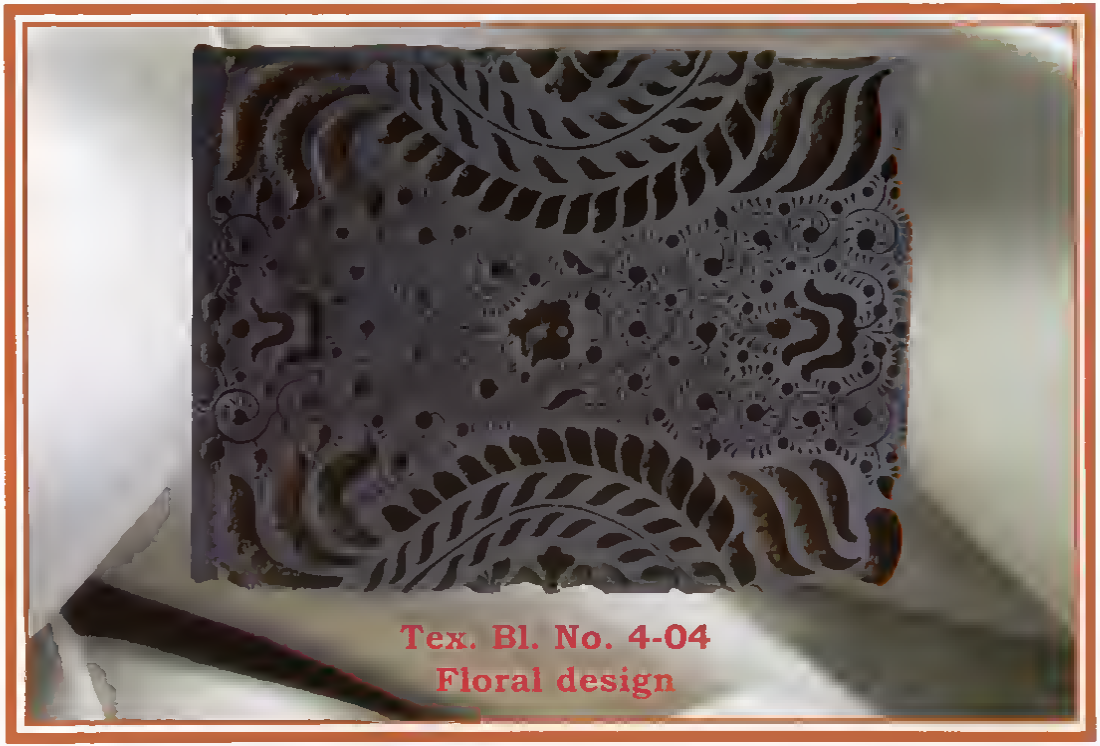
S.S.Jawahar, I.A.S.

Principal Secretary / Commissioner of Museums

Tex.Bl.No.1-04
Floral design on both sides

Tex.Bl.No.2-04
Flower pot design with handle

Tex.Bl.No. 3-04
Running floral design with handle



Tex. Bl. No. 4-04
Floral design

Tex.Bl.No. 5-04
Architecture design with handle

Tex.Bl.No. 6.04
Flower design with stem

Tex.Bl.No. 7.04

Plant with leaf and flower design

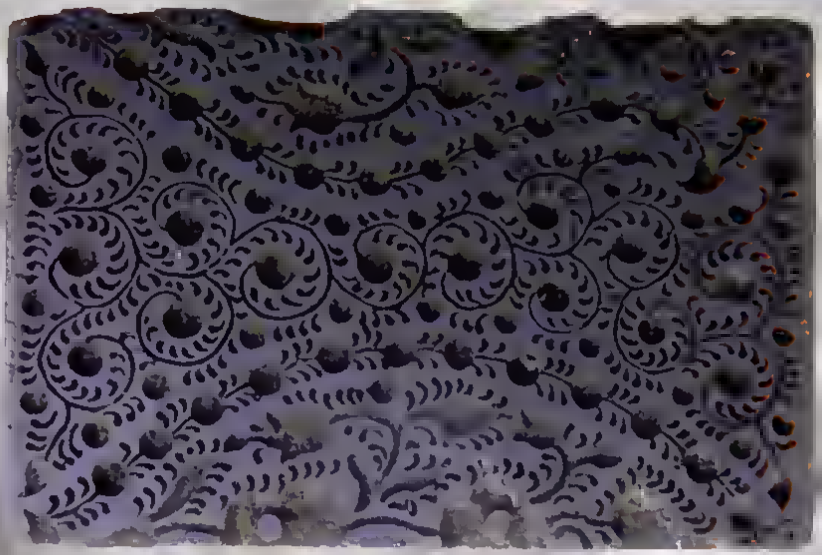
Tex.Bl.No. 8.04

Entire plant with opposite leaves and flower design

Tex.Bl.No. 9-04
Design like the cross section of seed & flower with running creeper design

Tex.Bl.No. 10.04

Opposite leaves arranged in a curved design

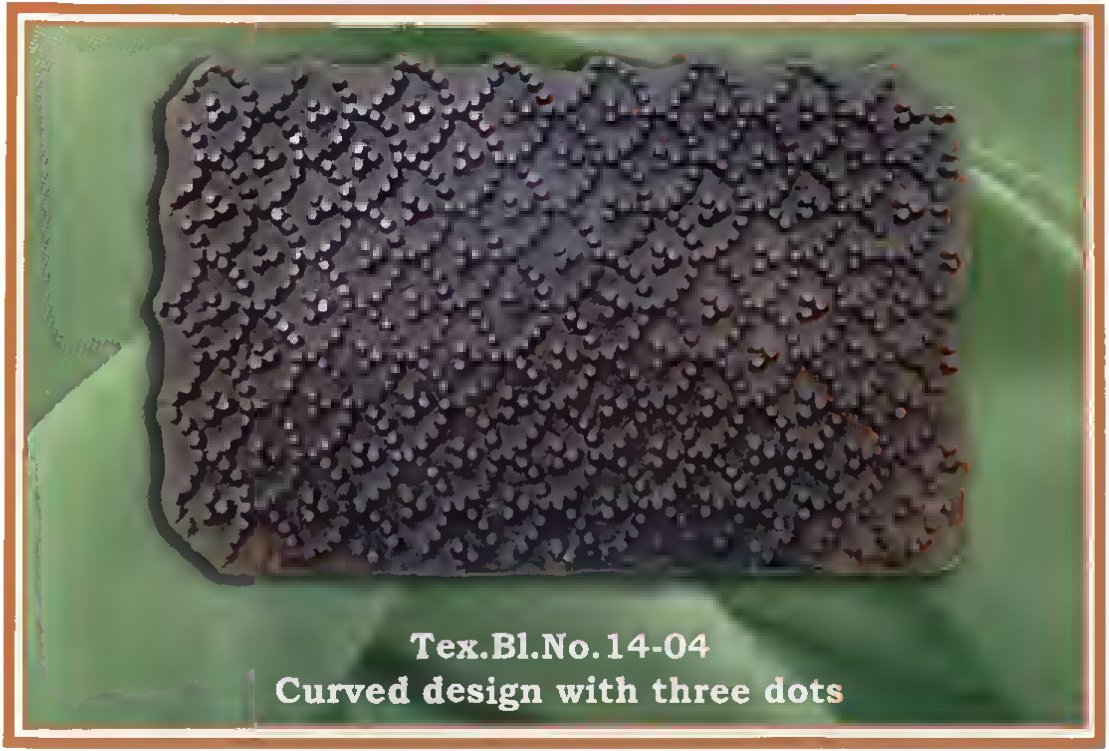


Tex.Bl.No. 11-04
Curved floral design

Tex.Bl.No. 12-04

Border design arranged in two rows

Tex. El. No. 13-04
Border design with handle

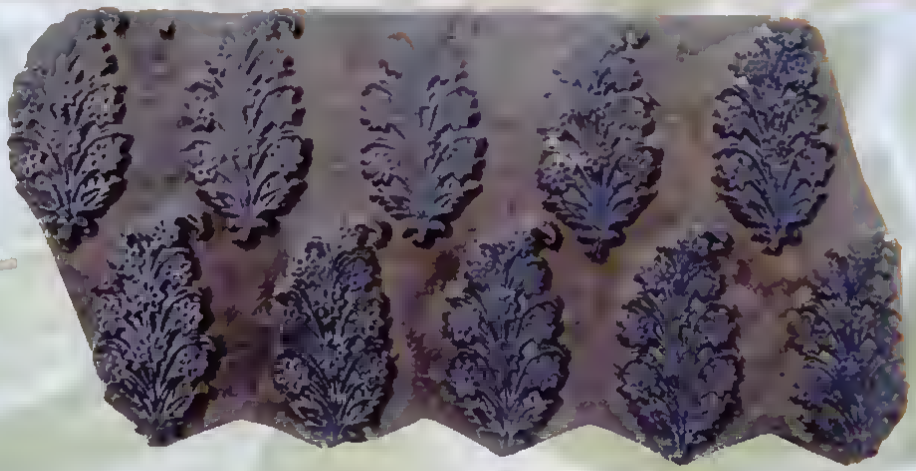


Tex.Bl.No.14-04
Curved design with three dots

Tex.Bl.No. 15-04
Two dotted designs arranged in horizontal row. Block with handle

Tex.Bl.No. 16-04
Cross design

Tex.Bl.No. 17-04
Flower with stem. Block with handle



Tex.Bl.No. 18-04
Individual flowers of five numbers arranged in a zigzag manner. Block with handle

Tex.Bl.No. 19-04
Cone shaped block with
comb design

Tex.Bl.No. 20-04
Design on one side arranged
symmetrically

Tex.Bl.No. 21-04
Design like a Rose flower

Tex Bl. No. 22-04
Conch design

Tex.Bl.No. 23-04
Floral design

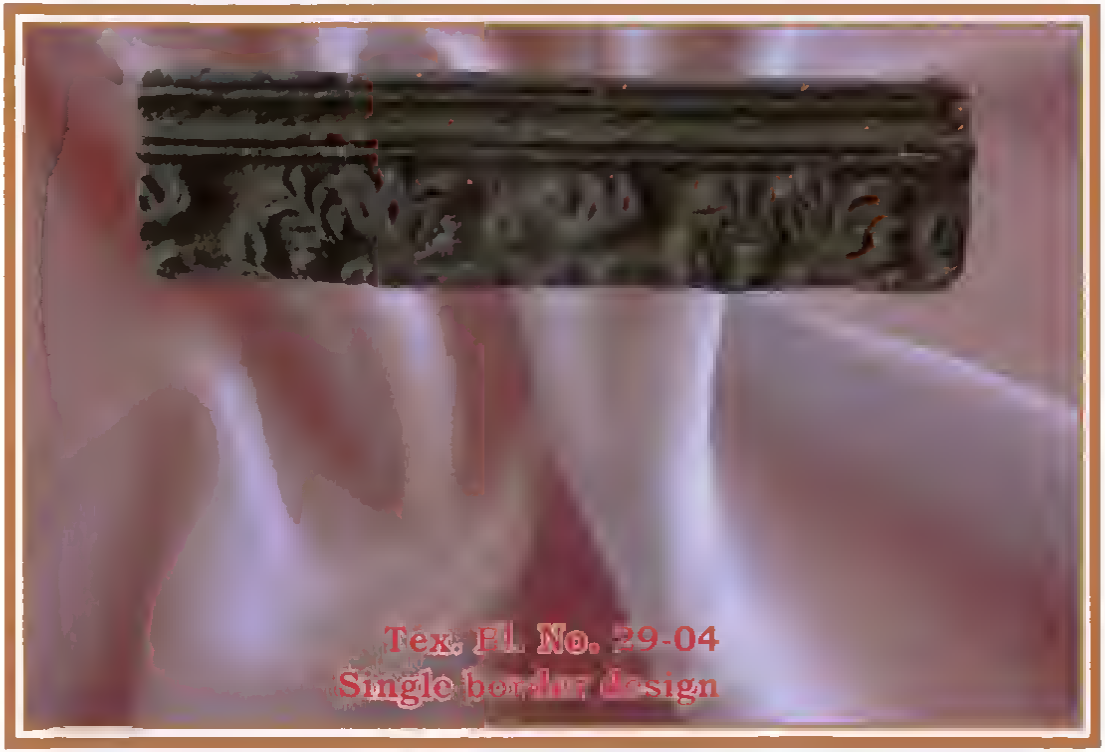
Tex.Bl.No. 24-04
Running floral design

Tex. Bl. No. 26-04
Flower design with
opposite leaves
Tex. Bl. No. 25-04
Floral border design
with handle

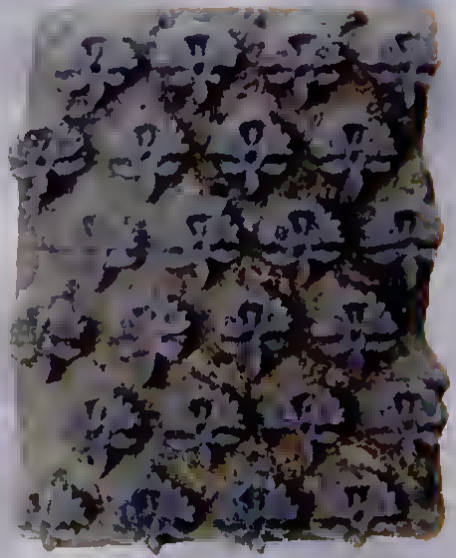
Tex.Bl.No. 27-04
Border design like four sepals

Tex.Bl.No. 28-04

Flower design. Block is in the shape of cone

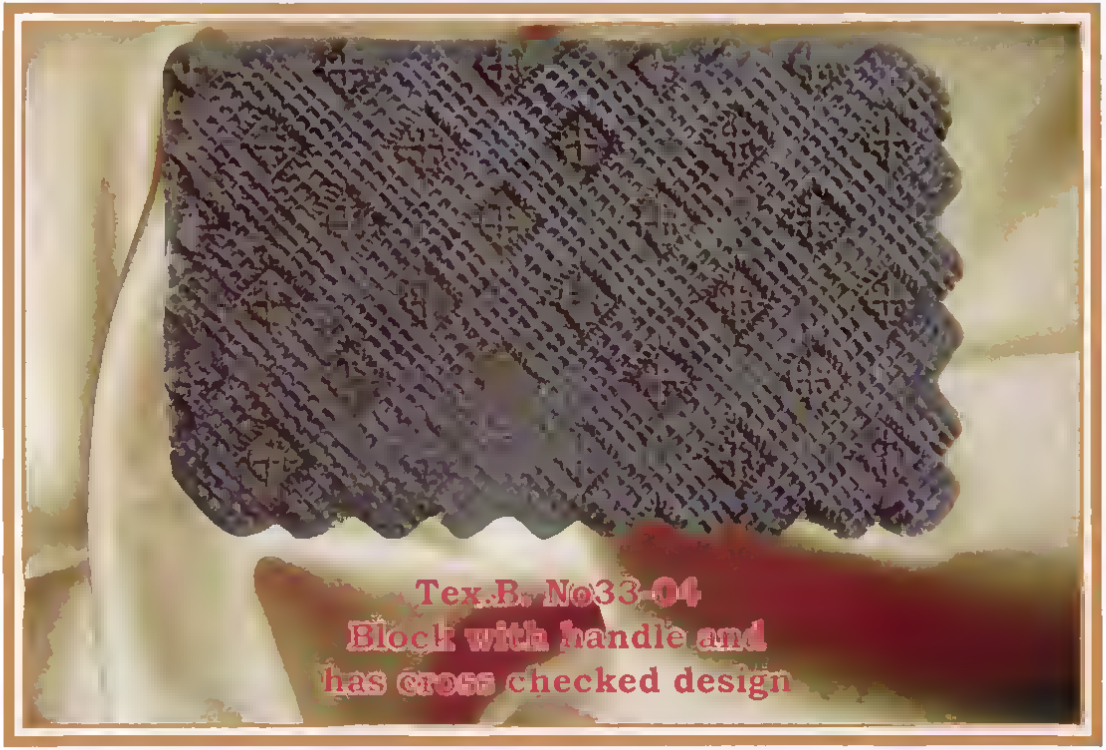

Tex. Pl. No. 29-04
Single border design

Tex. Bl. No. 30-04
Four plants in a row arranged individually
with flowers and curved at the end



Tex.Bl.No. 31-04
Floral design

Tex. Bl. No. 32-04
Block cone shaped with Kalasam design


Tex.B. No33-04
Block with handle and
has cross checked design

Tex. Bl. No. 34-04
Block is in the shape of cone
with floral design

Tex.Bl.No. 35-04
Cross section of flower design

Tex.Bl.No.36-04
Architecture design. Block with handle

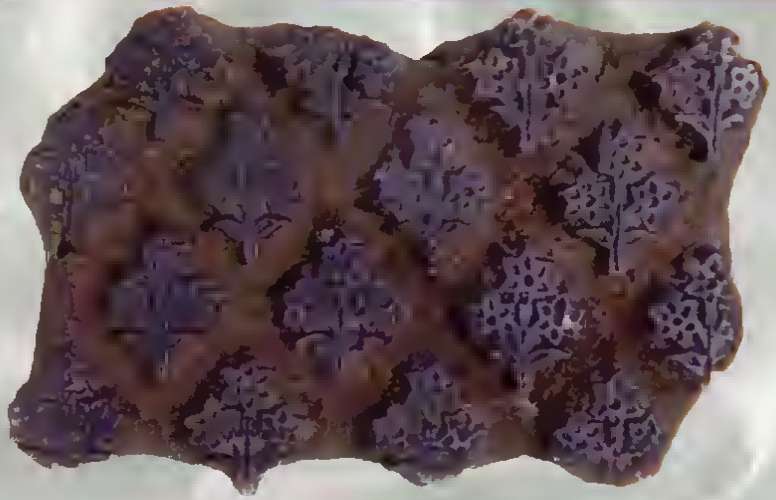
Tex.Bl.No. 37-04
Small and big sized mango design

Tex. Bl. No. 38-04
Running floral design

Tex. Bl. No. 39-04
Mango design

Tex.Bl.No. 40-04
Embossed plant design

Tex. Bl. no. 41-04
Flower design arranged in six
symmetrical rows



Tex.Bl.no. 42-04
Floral designs arranged in four rows in a zigzag manner with handle

Tex. Bl. No. 43-04
Floral design

Tex.Bl.No. 44-04

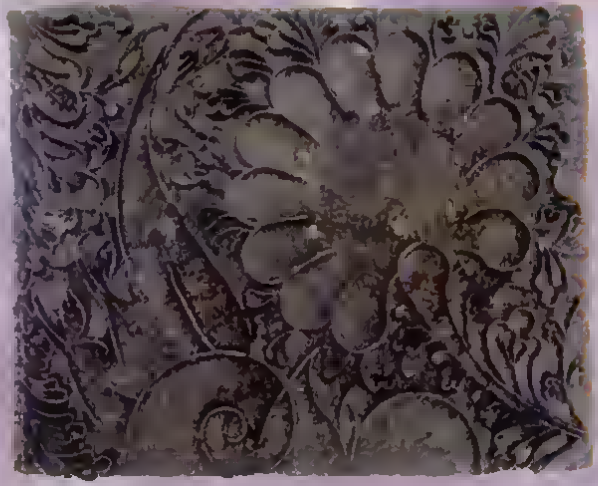
Diamond shaped floral design with handle

Tex. Bl. No. 45-04
Body and border design with handle

Tex.Bl.No. 46-04
Floral design in 2-4-6, 6-4-2 pattern

Tex.Bl.No. 47-04
Embossing design

Tex.Pl.No. 48-04
Embossed floral design



Tex. Bl. No. 49-04
Embossed flower design

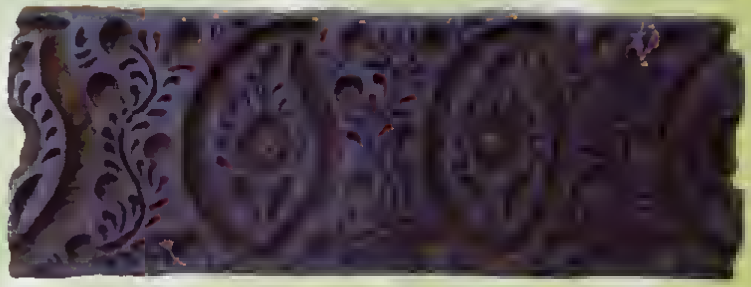
Tex. Bl. No. 50-04
Square block with circle and flower design

Tex. Bl. No. 51-04
Floral design

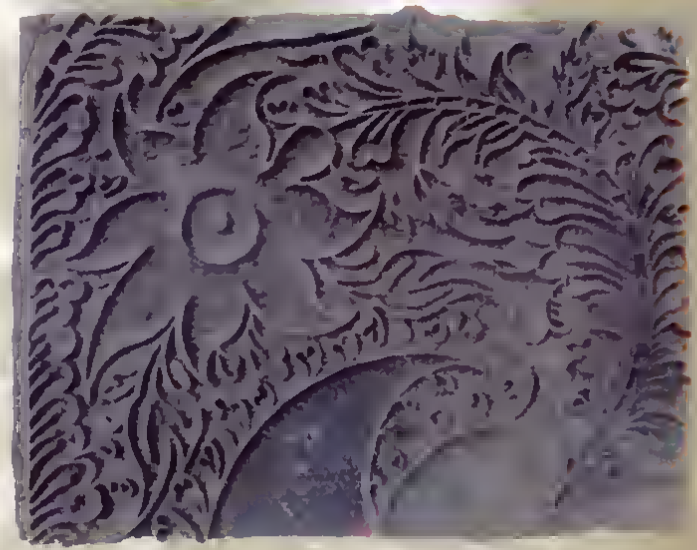
Tex. Bl. No. 52-04
'M' shaped design

Tex.Bl.No. 53-04
Rectangular block with eight flowers arranged in seven rows

Tex Bl. No. 54-04
Border design with floral and two striped design



Tex. Bl. No. 55-04
Mango shaped border design



Tex. Bl. No. 56-04
Embosed flower design

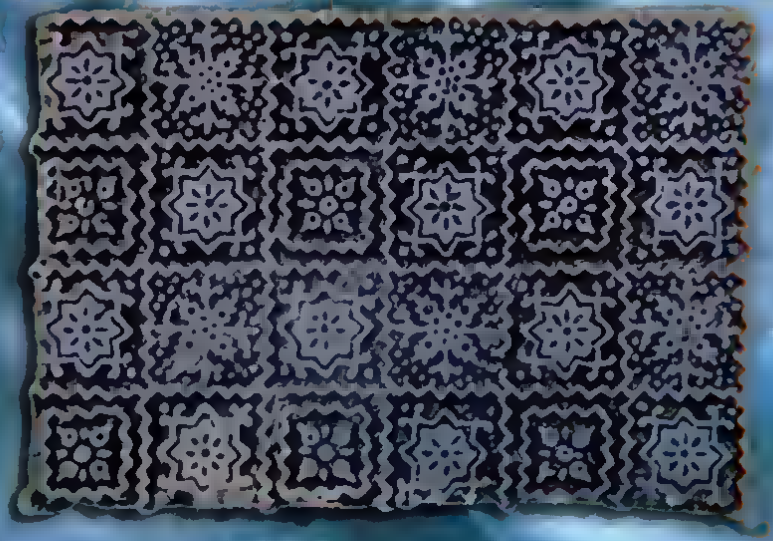
Tex.Bl.No. 57-04
Ham[illegible] - Swan design

Tex. Bl. No. 58-04
Creeper design

Tex.Bl.No. 59-04
Spear shaped design

Tex.Bl.No. 60-04
Sun design

Tex. Bl. No. 61-04
Conch shaped design

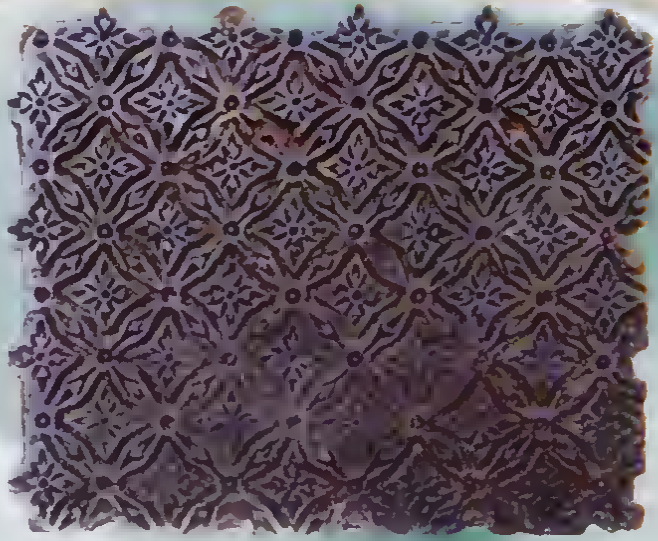


Tex.Bl.No. 62-04
Floral designs arranged in
six squares of six rows

Tex. Pl. No. 63-04
Entire plant with flowers

Tex.Bl.No. 64-04

Arrow design arranged in eleven rows



Tex. Bl. No. 65-04
Floral design arranged in circle.

Tex. Bl. No. 66-04
Border design with handle

Tex.Bl.No. 67-04
Seven plants arranged in six rows.
Block with handle

Tex.Bl.No. 68-04
Aamni-Mango shaped design

Tex.Bl.No. 69-04
'S' shaped design.

Tex.Bl.No. 70-04
Broad cone shaped block
with leaves & flowers

Tex.Bl.No. 71-04

Square block with four running creeper design bent inwards

Tex.El.No. 72-04
Bhutta- Rectangular block with
flowers of various shapes
sparsely arranged

Tex.Bl.No. 73-04
Block is in the shape of setsquare
with leaf design

Tex. Bl. No. 7-04
Swan Motif

Tex.Bl.No. 75-04
Two Aamni- Mango design
Block with handle

Tex.Bl.No. 76-04
Fan shaped floral design

Tex.Bl.No. 77-04
Design with fifteen small mang[illegible]
arranged asymmetrically in nine rows
Block with handle

Tex.Bl.No. 78-04
Cone shaped design with handle

Tex. Bl. No. 75-04
Creeper design

Tex. El. No. 80-04
Simple flower design

Tex. Bl. No. 81-04
Block oval in shape with two different shaped leaf structure.

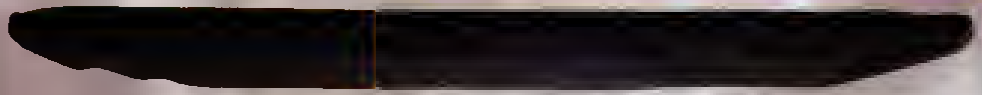
Tex.Bl.No.82-04
Creeper design in profuse manner

Tex.Fl.No. 83-04
Geometrical design with flowers
in the middle

Tex.Bl.No. 84-04
Flower design.

Tex.Bl.No. 85-04
Embossed plant design

Tex.Bl.No. 86-04
Ten small flowers arranged alternately in ten rows. Block with handle

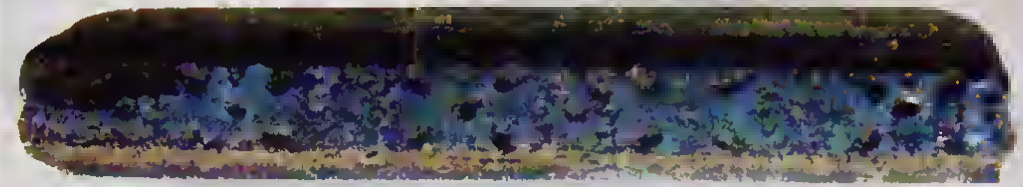


Tex. Bl. No. 87-04
Block in the shape of a boat
with floral design on the top

Tex. Bl. No. 88-04
Small plant designed border

Tex. Bl. no. 89-04
Geometrical design with dotted structure. Used as border design

Tex. Bl. No. 90-04
Creeper designed border

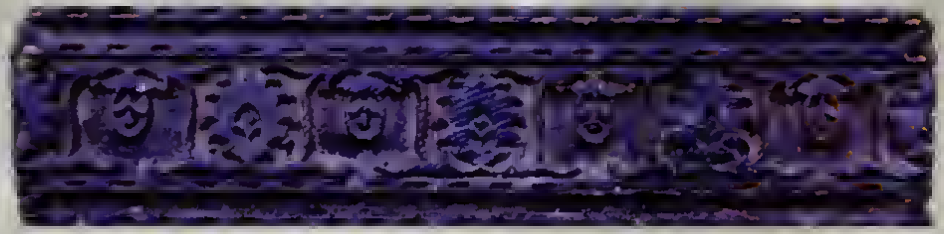


Tex. Bl.No- 91-04
Small block with Floral design

Tex. Bl. No. 92-04
Border design

Tex. Bl. No. 93-04
Three Straight lines on the block
Used as border design

Tex. Bl. No. 94-04
Border design with straight lines

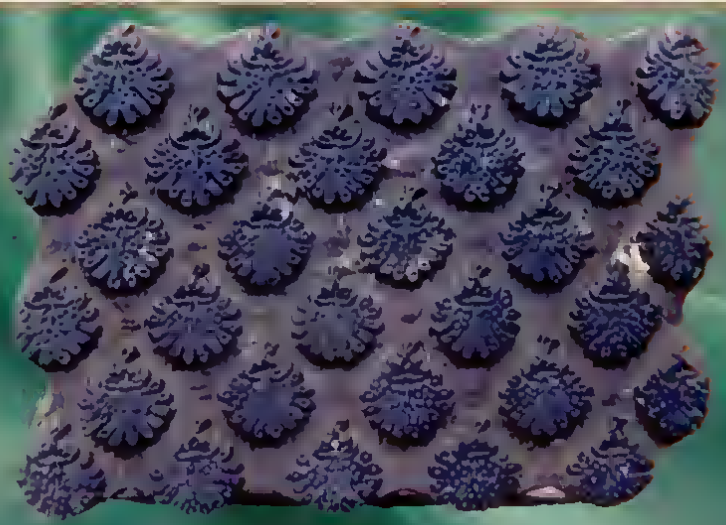


Tex. Bl. No. 95-04
Border design with handle

Tex. Bl. No. 96-04
Border design with handle

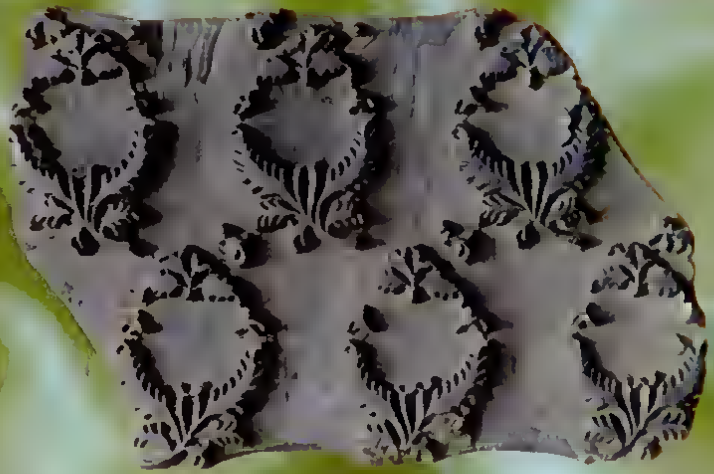
Tex.Bl.No 97-04
Embossed floral design

Tex.Bl.No.98-04
Floral & cross section of seed design



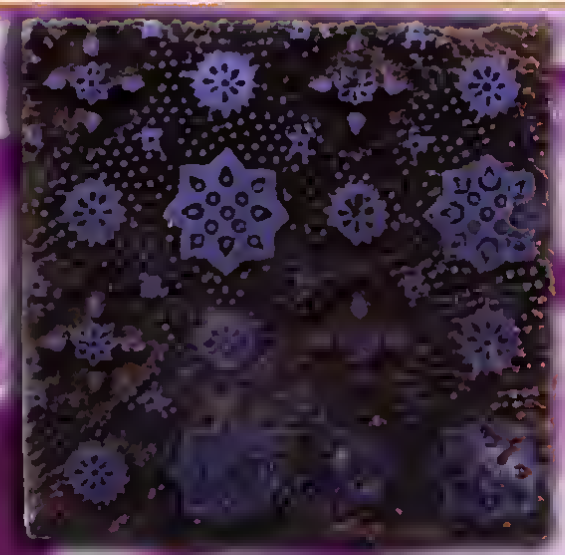
Tex.Bl.No. 99- 04
Custard apple like design. Five numbers
arranged alternately in six rows

Tex.Pl.No. 100-04
Rectangular block with dots and leaf in alternate arrangement



Tex. Bl. No. 101-04
Two leaves arranged alternately
Appears to be like a jewel design

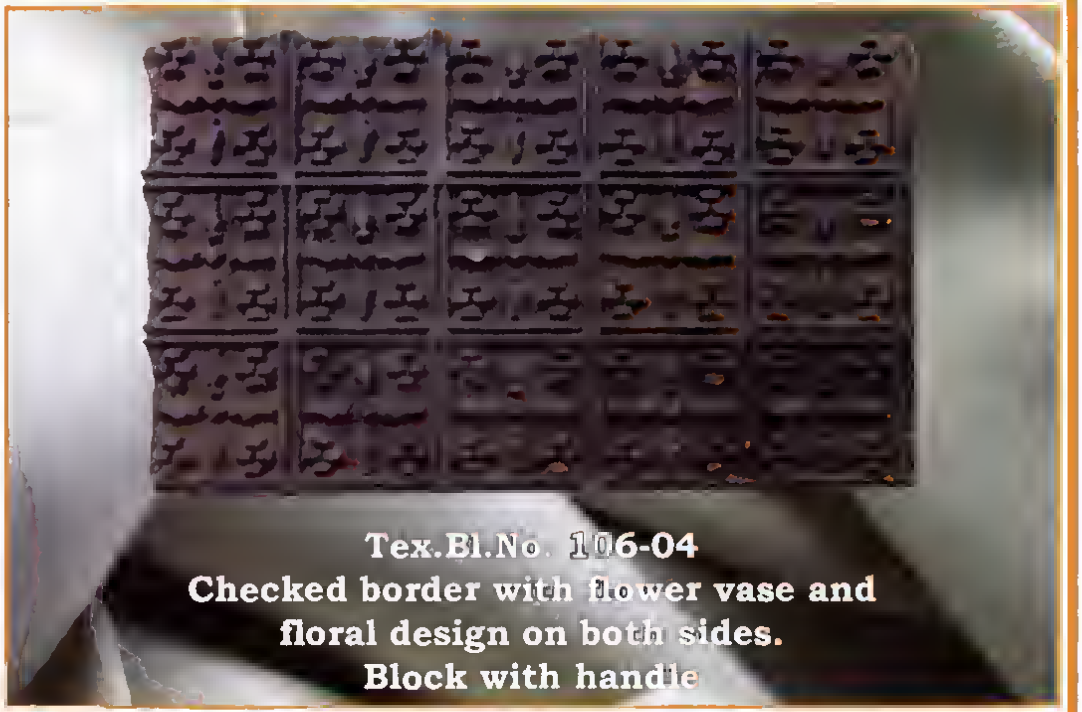
Tex.Bl.No. 102-04
Square block. The design appears like the cross section of seed design with six locules along with floral design



Tex.Bl.No. 103-04
Various flowers arranged amidst
the dotted structure

Tex. Bl. No. 104-04
Floral design arranged
in diamond shape in the centre

Tex.Bl.No. 105-04
Big Amni-mango designed flowers
in the middle with
floral designs at the corners



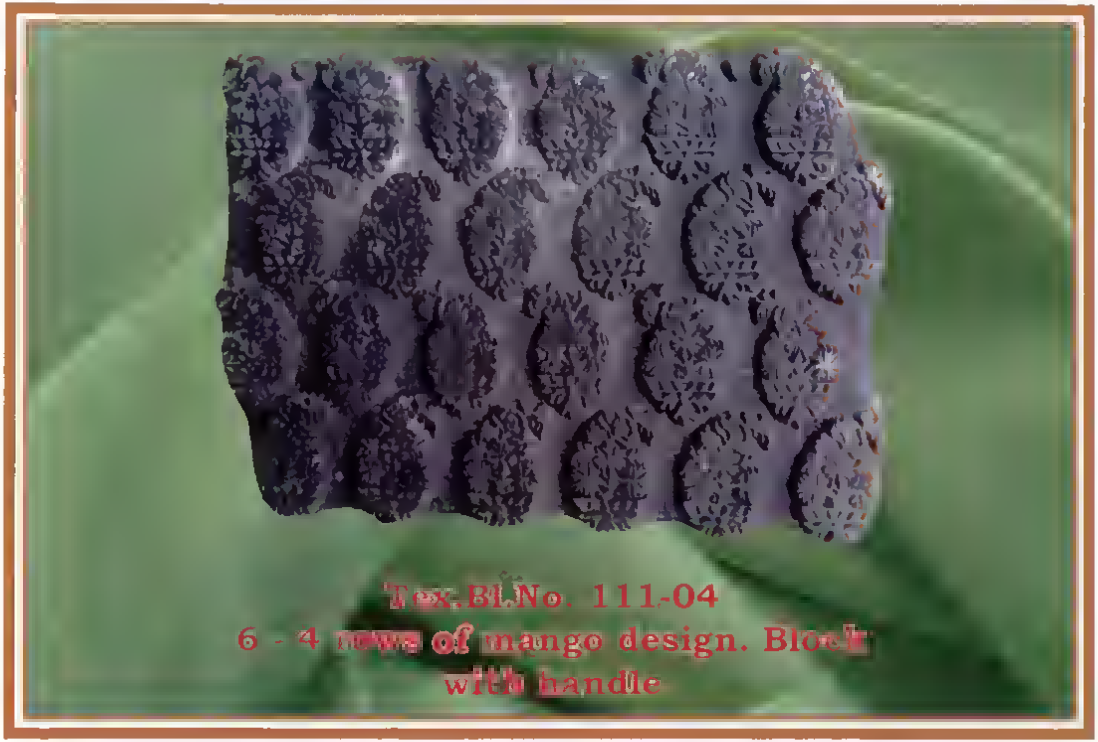
Tex.Bl.No. 106-04
Checked border with flower vase and
floral design on both sides.
Block with handle

Tex.Bl.No. 107-04
Pineapple design arranged in a zigzag manner. Block with handle

Tex. Bl. No. 108-04
Floral border design

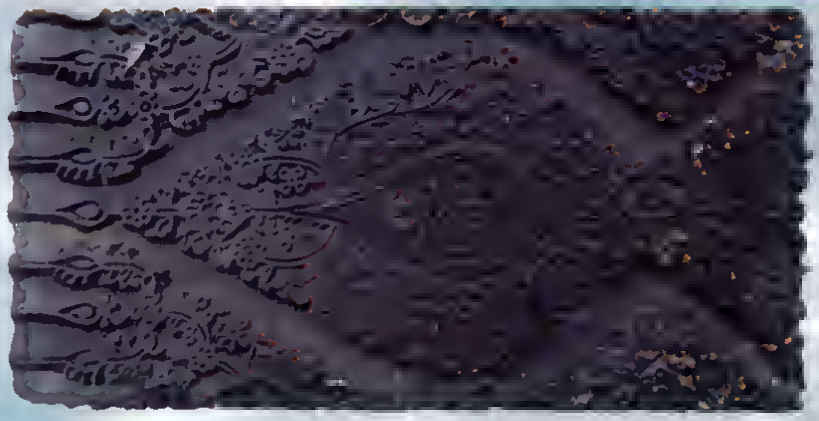
Tex.Bl.No. 109-04
Floral design arranged in 6-6 rows
in a zigzag manner

Tex Bl. No. 110-04
Running creeper design
used for border design


Tex.Bl.No. 111-04
6 - 4 rows of mango design. Block
with handle

Tex.Bl.No. 112-04
Engraved floral pattern as squares

Tex. Bl. No. 113-04
Mango border design with
strips of floral design on either side



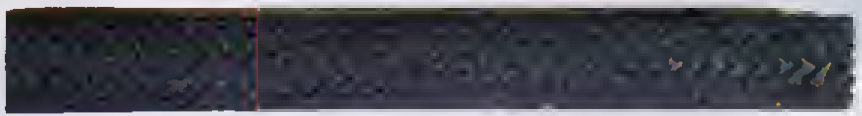
Tex. Bl. No. 114-04
Spindle shaped fioral design in the centre surrounded by running design

Tex.Bl.No. 115-04
Bandhi design.

Tex.Bl.No. 116-04
Spindle shaped floral design

Tex.Bl.No. 117-04
Floral design in a square block

Tex Bl. No. 118-04
Plain border designed like a crawling snake



Tex Bl. No. 119-04
'W' shaped border design arranged one below the other Block with handle.

Tex. Bl. No. 120-04
Border design having running floral pattern.

Tex. Bl. No. 121-04
Flower design used as border design

Tex. Bl.No. 122-04
Block with handle. Design like
a cross section of a fruit.

Tex. Bl. No. 123-04
Running creeper design. Block with handle.

Tex. Bl. No. 124-04
Floral design used as body and pallu design.

Tex. Bl. No. 125-04
Small strip of design followed by flower design.
Block with handle.

Tex. Bl. No. 126-04
Triangular block with floral design

Tex.Bl.No. 127-04
Ovule shaped pattern. 'X' type design
reaching the four corners

Tex. Bl. No. 128-04
Border design with strip pattern
on either side

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